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# Office of the Superintendent

## Updates in Montana Education

**Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!** The Office of Public Instruction has enjoyed working with you this calendar year and first semester of the 2019-2020 school year. We hope that you, your staff, and your students have a safe and enjoyable winter break. We look forward to serving you in the new year.

### Update on DPHHS Rules Affecting Schools



DPHHS provided red-lined updates (attached) of their proposed rule changes regarding school health and safety to the Interim Education Committee and the OPI on December 13<sup>th</sup>. The rules will be filed with the Secretary of State on January 7<sup>th</sup>, barring any legislative action. Due to feedback from schools and education partners, DPHHS made changes to their proposed rules to extend the implementation timelines, remove punitive measures, and reduce administrative and fiscal burdens. The OPI and education partners met with DPHHS and DEQ on [December 17<sup>th</sup>](#) to discuss implementation of the rules. DPHHS intends to make a good faith effort to work with OPI and schools to implement the rules, including partnering with DEQ to provide funding and technical resources. DPHHS and OPI will be sending more detailed information next month to schools and welcome any feedback on how to best assist schools in implementing them. Please feel free to reach out if you have any questions.

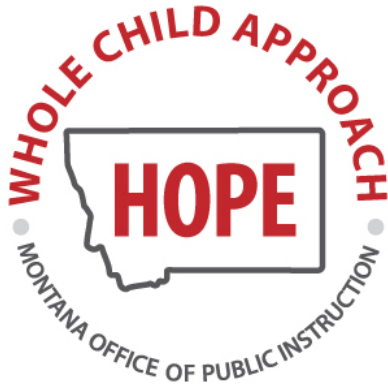
### 2020 Legislative Week

The Legislature is sponsoring a Legislative Week January 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> where all legislators will be invited to Helena. The purpose is to bring legislators together to provide opportunities to receive some additional training and share information. It is being held in conjunction with the study in Senate Bill No. 310 that is looking into annual sessions. You can find more information [HERE](#). The OPI will have our Health & Safety and CTE divisions at the capitol to discuss school safety, mental health, suicide prevention, and career readiness with legislators.

### Superintendent's Office December Events

- MIC3 Board Meeting
- Monthly Board of Land Commissioners meeting
- Hour of Code event with Central Heights Elementary
- Monthly meeting with Education Advocates
- Monthly meeting with the Governor's Office
- State Library Commission meeting
- Visit to Boulder schools

Follow the Office of Public Instruction on social media:    
For more information, contact [Dylan Klapmeier](#), 406-444-3559.



- **Family, student, and community engagement**
- **Safety, mental health, and suicide prevention**



- **Celebrating teacher excellence and extending leadership opportunities**
- **Teacher retention and recruitment**



- **Closing achievement gaps**
- **Improving math and reading with a focus on middle school**



- **Expanding industry, military, and post-secondary partnerships**
- **STEM, CTE, and workforce development emphasis beginning in middle school**

# Assessment

## ASSIST Conference

This year's conference promises to be one of the best! The [OPI Data and Assessment Conference](#) will be held in Helena at the Delta Hotel on January 13 and 14, 2020. This conference is designed to provide a little of something for everyone interested and invested in student achievement including school district leaders (e.g., Superintendents, Principals, District Administrative Staff, Curriculum Directors, Data Specialists), educators, and the general public. During this 2-day conference, we will spend time sharing some of the best practices for using data appropriately to inform instruction while ensuring educators are successful in administering the Montana statewide assessments. Day 1 and Day 2 will each have two keynote presentations followed by six one-hour breakout sessions and one 40-minute professional learning community session. There will be seven strands for breakout sessions ranging from best practices to personalized learning. We know you'll leave this conference with the tools to make meaningful connections between your data and instruction.

### Featured Presentations:

- Sessions on best practices and strategies to support student achievement;
- Sessions on understanding and utilizing the statewide assessment system;
- Sessions tailored to the needs of comprehensive and targeted support schools;
- Sessions focused on data and assessment literacy;
- Sessions tailored and personalized to unique school system roles;
- Sessions surrounding continuous school improvement practices;
- Sessions tailored to culturally and linguistically responsive practices;
- Step-by-step sessions guided to support schools with the "how to";
- Sessions designed specifically for new test coordinators;
- Sessions on state and federal collections, data and reporting;
- Sessions focused on content area (e.g., Literacy, Math, and Science); and
- Sessions geared to support veteran test coordinators.

Register soon - [OPI Data and Assessment Conference Registration](#) and for more information, visit the [ASSIST Conference Page](#) or contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

## MontCAS 411 News

The Assessment Division sends school leaders tailored monthly messages on the Montana Comprehensive Assessment System (MontCAS) via the Assessment 411 electronic mailing system. This month the issue had four reminders on (1) attending the [ASSIST Conference](#), (2) checking out the parent corner resources, (3) exploring state and local assessment monitoring resources, and (4) reviewing the assessment accessibility resources.

For more information, contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

## Assessment Bulletin News

The Assessment Division sends school system test coordinators monthly newsletters via the OPI Assessment Bulletin which are posted on the [OPI Statewide Testing page](#) of the OPI website. This bulletin is tailored to the test coordination responsibilities at each school system. This month the issue had four takeaways on (1) attending the [ASSIST Conference](#), (2) monitoring assessments with the ACCESS for ELLs test window from December 4–January 29, 2020, (3) completing the system test coordinator activities in the [MontCAS Application](#) (testing plans, test security agreements, etc.), and (4) completing ACT Manage Participation collection.

For more information, contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

## MontCAS Monitoring

The Assessment Division is in the process of conducting site visits and establishing the school monitoring cycle for the 2019–2020 school year. If your school district is selected, you will be contacted by the OPI and asked to provide the testing date ([Testing Date Tool](#)) information for the purpose of this visit. Currently, the only test administration monitoring occurring is the ACCESS for ELLs monitoring. This year approximately 3,700 English learners will be tested throughout the state. Schools must also complete the ACT Manage Participation collection in PearsonAccess<sup>Next</sup> in order to designate testing dates and testing modalities.

For more information, contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

## Accessibility News

Assessments help teachers and parents know if students are on the path to success. For the MontCAS state assessments we strive to ensure all students—including students who are learning English or have special needs—can meaningfully participate and demonstrate what they know and can do. To support schools with the selection of accessibility supports (e.g., universal tools, designated supports, and accommodations), please review [AIM Updates: Statewide Assessment Editor Fall Webinar](#). For students being served with English learner plans, IEPs or section 504 plans, supports should be discussed at plan meetings and decisions should be made by educators most familiar with the student ([ARM 10.56.104](#)). Some things to keep in mind are—use a systematic data-based process, ensure supports are identified in the educational plan, ensure supports are familiar to the student, and ensure the supports are provided for classroom instruction and assessments throughout the school year.

Visit the [Montana Statewide Assessments: Accessibility Resources webpage](#) or the [Accessibility page](#) to learn more this process.

For more information, contact [OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov](mailto:OPIAssessmentHelpDesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

# Content Standards and Instruction

## Content Standards Negotiated Rulemaking Updates

Public comments on the proposed standards can be sent via email through January 31, 2020. Visit the [OPI's website](#) to learn more.

- MAR Notice - [Negotiated Rulemaking Committee for Computer Science, Library Media, and Technology](#)
  - Met December 5, 2019 in Helena
  - [Computer Science Standards Draft Document for Public Review](#)
  - [Information Literacy/Library Media Standards Draft Document for Public Review](#)
  - [Technology Integration Standards Draft Document for Public Review](#)
  
- MAR Notice - [Negotiated Rulemaking Committee for CTE](#)
  - Met December 3, 2019 in Helena
  - [CTE Standards Draft Document for Public Review](#)
  
- MAR Notice - [Negotiated Rulemaking Committee for Social Studies](#)
  - Met December 2, 2019 in Helena
  - [Social Studies Standards Draft Document for Public Review](#)
  
- Additional meetings will be held January 8-10, and February 10-12, 2020

Interested parties may submit their views and comments concerning the proposed negotiated rulemaking process to Colet Bartow, Director of Content Standards and Instruction, Office of Public Instruction, P.O. Box 202501, Helena, Montana 59620, faxed to (406) 444-3924, or electronic mail to [cbartow@mt.gov](mailto:cbartow@mt.gov), no later than January 31, 2020.

## OPI Learning Opportunities Portal

Visit the [Learning Opportunities Portal website](#) to find out about upcoming 2020 classes, workshops, and courses. The Portal is just one of the ways the OPI informs educators about upcoming professional learning opportunities in our state.

## Learning Hub

If you haven't already, [check out](#) what more than 12,000 Montana educators have experienced! Our Hub team is always adding and updating our self-paced and facilitated courses. Please check the [Learning Hub homepage](#) for a complete [listing](#) and [catalog](#). Now is the perfect time to make your professional learning plan for 2020 and beyond.

For more information on these topics, contact [OPICSI@mt.gov](mailto:OPICSI@mt.gov).

## Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

### Support Available for Implementing SBAC Interim Assessments:

- Professional Development Opportunity: 2020 OPI Data and Assessment Conference  
The OPI Assessment Division is hosting a conference which will have sessions tailored to the needs of Comprehensive and Targeted Support and Improvement schools.
  - The conference will be conducted at the Delta Hotel in Helena. Attendees will receive a two-day conference filled with diverse sessions to meet individualized needs. The conference will begin at 8:00 am on Day 1 and conclude at 5:00 pm on Day 2.
- To request in-person or virtual training on SBAC Interim Assessments (Grades 3-8) complete [this google form](#).
- Here is a [google folder](#) for schools/districts with a PowerPoint and handouts from the OPI's SBAC Interim Assessment Trainings.
- Teacher Learning Hub two renewal unit course, [Implementing Smarter Balanced Interim Assessment](#), covers all you need to know about implementing Smarter Balanced interim assessment.
- Questions can be directed to OPI Assessment Help desk: [opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov](mailto:opiassessmenthelpdesk@mt.gov), 1-844-867-2569.

### Targeted Support and Improvement Grant Notification

The OPI is providing financial assistance for schools identified as Targeted Support and Improvement (TSI) under the Montana State Plan federally approved for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). These funds will be available for strategic use in the current school year (2019-2020) to support improving student outcomes for subgroup(s) identified for TSI.

Notification of approval or corrections required for the submitted TSI formula grants will be emailed to district leaders on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2019.

For more information, contact [julie.murgel@mt.gov](mailto:julie.murgel@mt.gov), 406-444-3172

## Finance

### Second Semester Bus Inspections

All 2<sup>nd</sup>-semester school bus inspections must be performed by the Montana Highway Patrol by January 31, 2020. Only school buses that pass inspection may be used to transport students and only school buses that pass inspection will receive state and county transportation reimbursement. Type E buses must also be inspected by the highway patrol. For Type E buses, please use the Inspection Form TR13A. A school bus that fails to pass inspection will not be eligible for state and county reimbursement until the bus is re-inspected and approved by the inspecting officer. The school district is responsible for contacting the Montana Highway Patrol for all bus inspections.

For questions or assistance, please contact [Donell Rosenthal](#), 406-444-3024.

### Spring Student Count for ANB

The Spring Student Count for ANB in MAEFAIRS is Monday, February 3 and is due no later than Friday, February 7, 2020.

For more information, contact [Nica Merala](#), 406-444-4401.

### School Elections

The window for regular candidate filing is Thursday, December 12, 2019 through Thursday, March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Candidates in First Class districts and counties with populations of 15,000 or more must report to the Commissioner of Political Practices. Please check the OPI School Finance Election page for Calendars, Handbooks and Forms. [Election Webpage](#)

For more information, contact [Nicole Thuotte](#), 406-444-4524.

### Impact Aid

Impact Aid applications must be submitted no later than January 31, 2020 for FY 21. Late applications are subject to a 10% payment penalty. Applications are now submitted through the [Impact Aid Grant System](#) (IAGS), instead of G-5. Data sheets are available to assist districts with completion of the application. [Impact Aid Data Sheets](#)

For more information, contact [Nicole Thuotte](#), 406-444-4524.



## Health Enhancement and Safety

### Emergency Preparedness Tips from DHS

Preparedness training that teaches school administrators and faculty what to do as somebody with a weapon walks into the school can be a frightening experience but is very important. There are many methodologies available either through your local law enforcement agency, a private company, or a government agency such as the Department of Homeland Security (DHS). DHS conducts no-cost active shooter preparedness workshops with an emphasis on Run, Hide, Fight. Remembering these three words can possibly save your life in an active shooter situation. Run, Hide, Fight is not intended to be done in that order but is something that is easily remembered when you are assessing the situation. Every location and incident is different and doing one, or all, of these is crucial in an emergency situation. Run – if you know where the shooter is and you can safely escape. Hide – if you are in an area that presents good coverage and possibly barricading. Fight – as a last resort to save your life and possibly the lives of others.

Be Safe!

[Randy Middlebrook](#), CPP

Protective Security Advisor, Region VIII-Montana

## Student/School Opportunities

### AmeriCorps

AmeriCorps NCCC is part of the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS), a Federal Agency, which administers the various Senior Corps and AmeriCorps programs nationwide. NCCC is a branch of the AmeriCorps programs that also includes AmeriCorps VISTA and AmeriCorps State/National. Specifically, the **NCCC program** is:

A full-time, team-based, residential service program for young adults who want to give back to communities in need at different locations across the country. For 10 months, teams work on 4-6 projects, such as: engaging youth; building and rehabilitating homes for families in need; cleaning up parks, streams, trails, and shorelines; fighting and preventing wildfires; and helping communities recover from disasters.

During their service, members are provided housing, food, uniforms, and the equipment that they will need to be successful in the field. They will receive a modest bi-weekly stipend for personal expenses and if they successfully complete the program, they are awarded a \$6,195 Education Award. This award can be used for future tuition costs or to pay back student loans.

Visit the [AmeriCorps website](http://nationalservice.gov). [[nationalservice.gov](http://nationalservice.gov)]

## UM Irish Studies Program

The Friends of Irish Studies and the University of Montana Irish Studies Program would like to share exciting news for educators and students. Tour Ireland for Office of Public Instruction (OPI) credit in June 2020 – this is an ideal opportunity for teachers to experience Éire, if you are interested in traveling, go to [www.friendsofirishstudies.com](http://www.friendsofirishstudies.com).

The Annual Irish Language Immersion Program is coming up in July 2020 for OPI credit at Montana Tech in Butte, to participate go to [www.friendsofirishstudies.com](http://www.friendsofirishstudies.com) and sign up. Montana Digital Academy offers a two-semester course for High School credit in Irish Language Studies delivered by the UM Irish Studies Program, for details see [montanadigitalacademy.org](http://montanadigitalacademy.org). We would like to thank the Friends of Irish Studies, Montana Digital Academy, UM Irish Studies Program, Montana Tech, Montana Office of Public Instruction and people of Montana for making these events possible.

## Earning a Diploma through the MT Youth Challenge Academy (SB 197)

The mission of the Montana Youth Challenge Academy is to reclaim the lives of at-risk youth and prepare them for high school completion and productive citizenship. This program has eight core components, which promote critical skills that are necessary for productive citizenship in 21<sup>st</sup> century Montana. These components are: academic excellence, health & hygiene, job skills, leadership, life-coping skills, physical fitness, responsible citizenship, and service to community. Students at the Academy complete an intensive 22-week residential phase that includes training activities during all waking hours. The program requires strong commitment from its students. Its graduates are students who have demonstrated considerable discipline and ambition.

SB-197 allows students, following the successful completion of the Montana Youth Challenge Academy, to be considered for a diploma from their home school district. Due to the rigor of the MYCA program, local districts can be assured that they are maintaining educational standards while also gaining the advantage of counting these students as graduates rather than dropouts. Meanwhile, formerly struggling students achieve greater academic credibility that positions them for greater post-secondary and professional opportunities.

## UPSTART Early Learning Opportunities for 3 and 4-Year Olds

The OPI has teamed up with Waterford to offer an amazing opportunity for our state's three and four-year-old children who are unserved or underserved. By the fall of 2020, we plan to have at least 200 three and four-year-old children registered to begin UPSTART (<https://www.waterfordupstart.org/>).

Contact [Danni McCarthy](#) to learn more.

## USDA Offers Tribal Students Career-Track Scholarships in Agriculture

The USDA Tribal Scholars Program is available to high school seniors entering their freshman year of college, and current freshman, sophomore, or juniors. General requirements include U.S. citizenship, a GPA of 3.0 or higher, and acceptance to, or currently attending a tribal college to study agriculture, food, and natural resources. The scholarship is renewable each year and is contingent on satisfactory academic performance and normal progress toward an associates or a bachelor's degree. Additional requirements are listed in the application package.

All application materials must be postmarked by February 09, 2020. See the [high school application](#) (PDF, 577 KB) and the [college application](#) (PDF, 592 KB) for details. For other questions, email [1994@usda.gov](mailto:1994@usda.gov).

**-END-**